

SANCTUARY ADVISORY COUNCIL

Thursday, September 9, 1999
10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Honolulu International Airport
Interisland Terminal, 7th Floor

Meeting Minutes

Attendance

SAC Members Present: Ron Bass, Sallie Beavers, Hannah Bernard, James Coon, Margaret Dupree, Bill Friedl, Walter Haas, June Harrigan, Lou Herman, Bill Lennan, Craig MacDonald, Keli'ipio Mawae, Patty Miller, Paul Nachtigall, Gene Nitta, Dick Poirier, Bob Schroeder, Glenn Soma, Claud Sutcliffe, Mike Stanton, Jeff Walters.

SAC Alternates Present: Carl Berg, Linda Bruckner, Isaac Harp, Rey Jonsson, Jeff Kalbach.

Excused: Colette Machado, Greg Kaufman, Charles Maxwell, Mike Tosatto, Terry White.

Others Present:

NOAA: Kellie Araki, Naomi McIntosh, Allen Tom.

Scripps Oceanographic Institute: Peter Worcester, Joe Mobley (UH-West Oahu).

US Navy: Joe Johnson.

PMRF-Navy: Michael Dick.

Kewalo Basin Marine Mammal Lab: Alison Craig, Siri Hakava, Adam Pack.

Pacific Whale Foundation: Robin Baird, Sascha Hoover, Rob Wilder.

Distributed Materials

- Meeting Agenda
- Final Meeting Minutes (7/8/99)
- Progress Report from the Sanctuary Co-Manager
- Maui County Report
- Honolulu County Report
- Conservation Committee comment letter on ATOC
- DLNR CDUA notice of acceptance for ATOC
- SSE Opportunity for research collaboration
- Registration form for the Workshop on Marine Mammal Research & Monitoring
- Congressional request for support of the NMSP
- Senator Inouye's press release re the Western Pacific Marine Debris Conference
- DLNR news release on water safety and shark attack prevention

Welcoming Remarks

The meeting was called to order at 10:05 a.m. by SAC Chair Jim Coon. Mr. Coon made a brief introduction of guests and called for an approval of the minutes taken at the last meeting on July 8, 1999. Minutes were approved as distributed. Mr. Coon noted a change to the meeting agenda and announced that committee reports will be given prior to the presentations.

Research Working Group Report

Research Chair Paul Nachtigall indicated that the Sanctuary staff has expressed an interest in developing research project ideas for the Sustainable Seas Expedition. He noted that some possible projects to consider would be conducting studies on hawksbill turtles and looking at the possibility of humpback whales engaging in moderate feeding behaviors (i.e., "snacking") while they are here in Hawaiian waters, and the investigation of mesopelagic benthic feeding areas.

On another note, Dr. Nachtigall reminded the group of the upcoming Marine Mammal Conference in Wailea, Maui. The Sanctuary will be involved in the MMC meeting and will host a workshop on research in marine sanctuaries prior to the start of the conference on Sunday, November 28, 1999. He remarked that over 2000 people are expected to attend and a number of workshops will be held prior to the conference. Topics include: acoustic noise, swimming with wild dolphins, and global information systems. A website is available to register or receive more information on the conference.

Conservation Committee Report

Lou Herman, Conservation Chair, indicated that the committee held a video conference meeting on August 13, 1999 to discuss the various conservation issues concerning the Sanctuary. Of these issues, the ATOC project off the island of Kauai and the DEIS for LFA and the HATS ARRAY projects were discussed. Dr. Herman briefly reviewed the committee's discussions surrounding these issues.

Presentations

Acoustic Thermometry of Ocean Climate (ATOC):

Peter Worcester, Principal Investigator for the ATOC project, presented the latest activities of the Scripps Oceanographic Institute project which attempts to measure large scale temperature variability in the ocean through the use of acoustic sound transmittal. According to Mr. Worcester, sounds increase in warmer water and decrease in cooler water. Thus, measuring the sound's travel time can provide average large-scale temperatures along the path of the sound.

Mr. Worcester indicated that the ATOC project will cease operation in October 1999 and is currently proposing to reuse the ATOC sound source with the same transmission schedule for the next five years. The distribution of animals will continue to be monitored during this period to account for project impacts. Mr. Worcester further noted that the purpose of the project is to study a variety of oceanographic phenomena and collect five years worth of data. Such information will help to refine our understanding of how the ocean works and how sound propagates (this is of particular importance to the US Navy).

With regard to project specifics, Mr. Worcester indicated that the ATOC sound source is approximately three feet wide by six feet high. He stated that the sound source is located

one-half mile below the surface, transmits 260 watts of power, and emits sound at 195 decibels. The source, which is located one-half mile below the surface emits a particular pattern of sound which receivers are trained to pick out through background noise. At a distance of 11 meters above the source the sound drops to 174 db and at 200 meters above the source, sound drops to 139 db (Mr. Worcester noted that based on their data, 200 meters below the surface is the estimated depth limit that humpback whales are known to dive to).

Following the presentation, the SAC was allowed a brief period to direct their questions to Mr. Worcester. Issues of particular importance to the SAC focused on the status of the project and the intent of Scripps to conduct ATOC as an ongoing long-term project or wrap up testing at the end of the next five year period. Mr. Worcester acknowledged that continuation of the project is possible depending on the success of the testing techniques, however, Scripps would still be required to go through the EIS procedure again should they opt to continue with testing after five years.

In addition to Mr. Worcester's presentation on the ATOC project, Joe Mobley also discussed his marine mammal monitoring research for the project. According to Dr. Mobley, a number of different factors were examined to determine impacts on marine mammal populations around the testing site. These factors included changes in whale song, changes in behavior (which was sighted from shore stations), changes in distribution numbers and distances of whales from the sound source.

Dr. Mobley noted that the strongest effects seemed to be in the amount of time the humpback whales spent underwater between surfacing and he went on to conclude that their underwater time appeared to get longer as they got closer to the sound source. He also remarked that the presence or absence of calves seemed to be a stronger determinant of behavior changes than the sound source itself. Overall, Dr. Mobley stated that there seemed to be more whale sightings during the testing period, possibly due to increases in whale abundance, and there were no changes in distance from sound source. He observed that there were only subtle changes in behavior, but it was pointed out that there were a limited amount of variables considered in his study.

Following Dr. Mobley's presentation the SAC was allowed a brief comment period. The group identified a number of concerns including whether studies have been conducted on sound frequencies and tolerance levels of humpback whales, and why testing sound levels were conducted at much lower levels (at 175 db) when actual project sound transmissions are conducted at much higher levels (at 195 db).

Surveillance Towed Array Sensor System (SURTASS) Low Frequency Active (LFA) Sonar System:

Mr. Joe Johnson of the US Navy presented the current status of the LFA project to the SAC. According to presentation materials, the project consists of a string of hydrophones towed behind a ship to pick up sounds in the ocean. A low frequency active sonar is used in conjunction with this to broadcast sounds which allow for the hydrophone array to listen for reflections of the sounds off of submarines. The SURTASS LFA sonar system uses specialized sounds and echo detection methods to maximize the range at which submarines can be detected and tracked.

As with the other presentations, the SAC was allowed a brief comment period following Mr. Johnson's presentation. Some of the issues identified by the SAC included the Navy's ability to accurately evaluate the project's adverse impacts on marine mammals given the

short monitoring period allocated for such testing. The SAC remarked that such a limited evaluation period can not account for long-term effects that are based on chronic exposure.

Education Working Group Report

Education Chair Patty Miller announced that the Education Working Group met prior to that morning's SAC meeting at 8:30 a.m. to discuss possible education activities and events for the upcoming Sustainable Seas Expedition project.

She further noted that the RFPs for the website and poster projects are in the process of going forward. A memo was also distributed regarding the status of these projects and indicated that purchase requests have been submitted to NOAA's Finance office which will accept and process contract proposals.

With regard to SSE, Ms. Miller announced that Dr. Sylvia Earle will be arriving in the islands next January to kick-off the project for Hawaii. She noted that the research conducted for SSE will focus on Sanctuary habitat characterization, not hard core research and in-depth projects. The SSE crew and National Geographic will be here for two weeks and Ms. Miller stressed the need for the SAC to establish what they would like to see accomplished through this effort. She further remarked that this is a good opportunity to promote education on the Sanctuary program and would like to see everyone on the SAC take an active role in the project. Some possible activities include holding open houses on Oahu and Maui, developing a project for Kona, holding video conferenced student summits, involving high school teachers in monitoring projects, facilitating student research time on boats, and holding kids' dive days on Atlantis Submarines. Ms. Miller further noted that KidScience will be devoting a whole month of coverage to the SSE project.

Maui County Report

Hannah Bernard, Maui County representative, presented an update on her activities within the community and on behalf of the SAC. She stated that on August 24, 1999 she attended a public meeting and participated in a panel discussion regarding the Navy's proposed expansion of the Hawaii Shallow Water Testing Range. The meeting was hosted by the Kihei Community Association and was filmed by Maui's public access television station "Akaku".

Kauai County Report

Walter Haas, Kauai County representative, announced that Jean Souza, Kauai Sanctuary Liaison, has been working on acquiring new office space in Nawiliwili for the Kauai Sanctuary office. In addition to this, Ms. Souza is in the process of developing a Memorandum of Understanding with Kilauea Point National Wildlife Refuge. Dr. Haas noted that the Sanctuary recently participated in the Kauai County fair and is busy planning events for Dr. Sylvia Earle's visit on September 25, 1999. Other Sanctuary activities include the joint conference with the Hawaii Environmental Educator's Association and the Hawaii State Teachers' Association and an Ocean User's workshop to be held on November 17, 1999.

Honolulu County Report

City and County of Honolulu representative Bill Friedl updated the SAC on his activities with his constituency, noting that he chose elected representatives and neighborhood members to establish links with the Oahu community. Mr. Friedl went on to note that in

April 1999 he and Naomi McIntosh, Oahu Sanctuary Liaison, met with Councilmember Steve Holmes to update him on the Sanctuary program and the SAC. Letters of introduction were also sent to Art Challacombe of the City and County's Department of Planning and Permitting, Councilmember Rene Mansho, Councilmember John Henry Felix, Hawaii Kai Neighborhood Board Chair Charlie Rodgers, and North Shore Neighborhood Board Chair Michael Magaoay.

SAC Chair Report

SAC Chair Jim Coon discussed the structure of future SAC meetings, noting that New Business will follow the various committee reports and any comments or questions should be saved and identified at that time. Some SAC members expressed their concern with this format but Mr. Coon reiterated that it would be best to try this procedure and make changes as needed.

Sanctuary Manager Report

Allen Tom announced that Dr. Sylvia Earle will be coming to Hawaii at the end of September to initiate plans for the SSE project. Dr. Earle will attend a planning meeting in Honolulu on Friday, September 24 and fly to Kauai on September 25th for talks and booksignings at the Kauai Children's Discovery Museum and the Princeville Hotel. Mr. Tom remarked that booksigning proceeds will go to KCDM.

In mid-November the Sanctuary will be conducting the annual Ocean Users Enforcement Workshops on Maui, Oahu, Kauai, and Hawaii. Participants will include Gene Nitta and Trevor Spradlin of the National Marine Fisheries Service. Workshop dates are as follows:

Wednesday, November 17th	Lihue, Kauai
Thursday, November 18th	Kona, Hawaii
Monday, November 22nd	Kihei, Maui
Tuesday, November 23rd	Honolulu, Oahu

Mr. Tom distributed a press release from Senator Inouye's office which provides a list of the various programs that he has appropriated funding for in the Fiscal Year 2000. Included on this list is a marine debris conference which the Sanctuary has been named as the conference coordinator. Mr. Tom emphasized that this funding appropriation has not yet been finalized.

Mr. Tom made some final reminders to the SAC regarding the international conference on marine mammals which will be held on Maui in November, the development of a Hawaii Sanctuary site brochure which is currently underway, and the SSE project which will be occurring in Hawaii from approximately January 10 - 20, 2000. Mr. Tom encouraged the SAC to get involved in these projects and proposed that the next SAC meeting be held on Maui in January 2000 to allow for SAC participation in SSE events.

State Co-Manager Report

Jeff Walters distributed a memo to the SAC which outlined his activities to date. He noted that DLNR is currently in the process of hiring a Sanctuary public outreach coordinator. If they are unable to find a suitable candidate within their department, they will initiate a public search. The SAC will be informed if and when this public announcement is made.

Dr. Walters also indicated that he has been in contact with Education Chair Patty Miller and has made tentative funding commitments for the proposed poster and Sanctuary site

brochure. With regard to research, the State intends to work with the SAC and Sanctuary staff to develop two or three small-scale research projects in the natural and social sciences which would further enhance Sanctuary management and resource protection. Mr. Tom clarified that the research money given to the State will not be used for State-initiated projects, rather, it will be used for Sanctuary research projects that have been identified by the Research Working Group. Dr. Walters also acknowledged that the State has offered some support for the upcoming 13th Biennial Conference on the Biology of Marine Mammals which will be held on Maui in late November.

In July, Dr. Walters attended a meeting at the Maui Sanctuary site to meet with the Sanctuary staff and receive updates on what the program has been involved in to date. In August, Dr. Walters participated in a Sanctuary staff meeting to develop work plans and funding priorities for the next fiscal year.

Hawaii County Report

Sallie Beavers, the newly selected Hawaii County representative, acknowledged that being new to the council she has not yet had a chance to get out into the community. She did mention, however, that a few community members have already expressed a desire to have Ocean Users workshops held in Kona and an interest in having Dr. Sylvia Earle visit the island.

New Business

The SAC outlined a meeting schedule for the year 2000. Meetings shall be held on Wednesdays rather than Thursdays. The schedule is as follows:

November 17, 1999 (Honolulu Airport)
January 13, 2000 (Maui Sanctuary Site - subject to SSE schedule)
March 1, 2000
May 3, 2000
July 5, 2000
September 6, 2000
November 1, 2000

Lou Herman made a motion to have the SAC approve the Conservation Committee's statement on the Navy project with amendments. Dr. Herman suggested that the statement read that the SAC does NOT support the expansion of the project and document should be revised so it comes from the SAC rather than the Committee. Motion carried.

Dr. Herman made a motion to have the position statements on ATOC and LFA drafted by the Conservation Committee and Research Working. He reminded the SAC that the ATOC comment deadline is September 22, 1999 and the LFA deadline is October 24, 1999. Motion carried.

On a final note, Dr. Herman requested that those interested in offering input for the position statements contact him. Dr. Walters also reminded the group that although we are drafting a SAC position, this does not preclude members from offering individual comments or constituency positions on the projects.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:20 p.m.. The next SAC meeting will be held on **Wednesday, November 17, 1999** at the Honolulu Airport on Oahu.